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Agencies Invite Public to Open House on Mountain States Transmission Line

Helena -- The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service will host an open house and public information meeting on the environmental impact statement (EIS) being prepared for NorthWestern Energys proposed Mountain States Transmission Intertie (MSTI). The purpose of the open house and meeting is to share current information on project alternatives being studied and the status of the EIS process.

The open house and meeting will be held at the Butte Holiday Inn Express at 1 Holiday Park on Thursday, April 9, 2009. Beginning at 5:30 p.m., the agencies will host an open house to share current project information, including the locations of alternatives and local routing options being considered in the Butte area. At 7:00, the agencies will give a brief presentation describing the environmental review being conducted. This will be followed by a question and answer session lasting until 9:00 pm.

NorthWestern Energy has applied for a permit under the Montana Major Facility Siting Act (MFSA) to construct, operate, and maintain the 500 kV line from Montana to Idaho. As proposed, the line would extend from a new substation approximately 5 miles southeast of Townsend, through the Whitehall and Butte areas to an enlarged Mill Creek substation east of Anaconda, then south along the Interstate 15 corridor to the Midpoint Substation in south central Idaho.

State and federal permitting agencies are jointly preparing an EIS on the proposal. The EIS will address impacts of the proposal and alternatives to it. Public scoping meetings held from September to early November 2008 provided the public with the opportunity to comment on the issues, alternatives, and measures to reduce impacts that should be considered in the EIS. The draft EIS is targeted to be released for public review and comment in October 2009.

The MFSA application to DEQ and MSTI project maps can be viewed at the following web site: www.deq.mt.gov. For more information please contact Tom Ring with the DEQ at (406) 444-6785, Mark Mackiewicz with the Bureau of Land Management at (435) 636-3616, or Dan Rapkoch with NorthWestern Energy at (406) 490-1895.

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